

V THE EVIDENCE OF THE FORGED

PADUA COMPASSO BOOK STRUCTURE

Galileo Galilei's *Le Operazioni del Compasso geometrico et militare* (Padua, 1606) at the Biblioteca del Seminario in Padua has recently surfaced as a forgery and its examination allowed new comparisons in elucidation of the forged *SNML*. The chief impression at first sight was that the Padua *Compasso* paper must be new because of a number of anomalies, including odd formation, stiff feel and roughness, and tinting. A paper fragment was stuck to the title page (III, Fig. 14a) when the printing of the letter "I" of the word "OPERAZIONI" pressed it on the paper surface. The fragment was so easily loosened from the page that it is unconceivable it had remained in place for several hundred years. The paper under the fragment is brighter, likely protected from applied tinting by the fragment. A number of similarities between the forged papers of the Padua *Compasso* and *SNML* are pointed out in chapter III. In the following, we sum up observations about the forger's manipulation of the book structure gathered during our examination of the book November 8, 2012.

As with the *SNML*, the Padua *Compasso* is a combination of authentic and fabricated elements. The book cover is a genuine late seventeenth- to early eighteenth-century gilt



Fig. 1: Padua Compasso, front book cover.

Fig. 2: Padua Compasso, decoratively printed paste down, inside front cover.

Fig. 3: Padua Compasso, opened to the last page of forged text block showing page 34v with a repair at one corner, and, opposite, the blank leaf III, an old paper of a whiter colour.

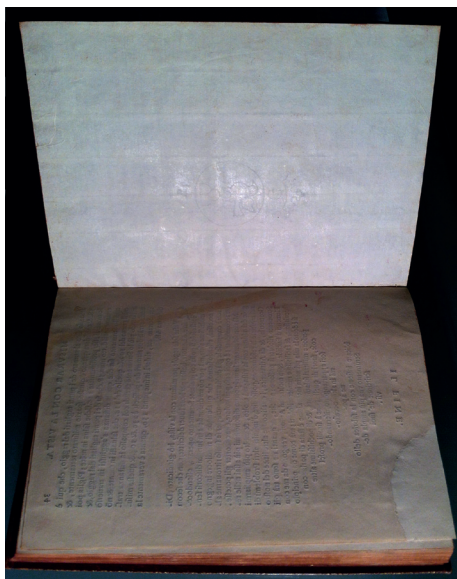


Fig. 4: Cross section of the Padua Compasso illustrating the location of the forged text block (T1–Q) inserted into a gutted full leather book cover retaining end papers and blank leaves I–IV.

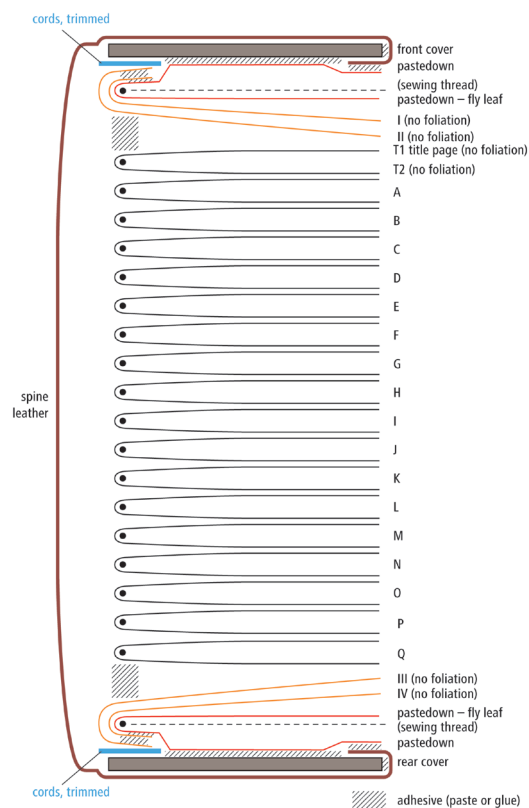


Fig. 5: Padua Compasso, opened to pages 25v and 26r, showing sewing thread that was cut when the head of the text block was trimmed.

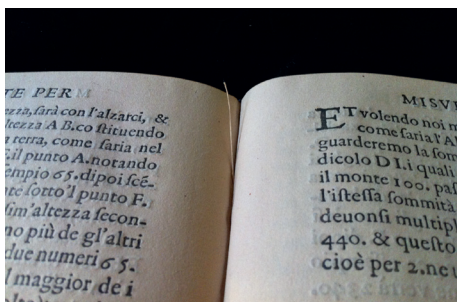
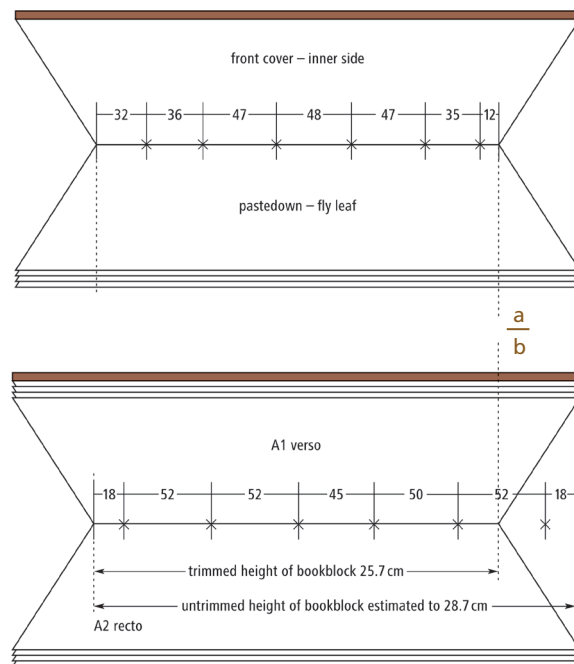


Fig. 6: Sewing stations of the original book evident between the front cover and fly leaf (a) and the sewing stations of the inserted Compasso forgery (b). The locations of sewing station (a) and (b) do not match.



Morocco book cover (book cover dimensions: 26,8 × 19,3 cm including spine) (Fig. 1). On the inside, decorated endpapers and two blank sheets at the front and back appear to be part of an original book (page dimensions: 25,8 × 18,7 cm) (Fig. 2). The remainder of the book interior was gutted and replaced with the forged *Compasso* (Fig. 3). This picture shows the one original blank leaf adjacent to the last leaf of the forged text block. The book structure showing original and new parts is seen in the diagram (Fig. 4). An oddity is evident in the sewing. When the *Compasso* was printed and sewn, the paper was larger than it is now. When the text block was trimmed to fit into the current cover, the sewing threads at the top sewing stations were cut and their ends now are loose (Fig. 5). Not surprisingly, original sewing stations still evident in the front and back blank leaves do not match the new sewing stations of the forgery (Fig. 6).

The red goatskin leather cover is lavishly decorated with gilding that extends to the board edges. The decorated end papers (pastedown and fly leaf) are each one sheet, relief printed with a pattern in several colours. The front pastedown features remnants of a paper label which was probably an ex libris showing a griffin (Fig. 7). The two blank leaves I and II at the front are separate leaves, though they apparently belong together. The fibre source of the blank sheets, bast, is appropriate for seventeenth-century paper (Fig. 8). Folio II has a watermark in the center: three mountains and a dove with wings in a circle, a G and a crown above and an F under the circle (chain line distance is 26 mm on average) (Fig. 9). The blank



Fig. 7: Padua *Compasso*, detail of the paste down, inside front cover, showing trimmed edges of the paste down (top edge) and remnants of paper label. Where the paste down was peeled off, the skinned leather was tinted red.



Fig. 8: Bast fibre sample from the blank leaf I of the Padua *Compasso* photographed at 200×, viewed in crossed polarized light, showing cross marks and interference colours typical of bast fibres.

leaves are very white and show a high gloss from burnishing (see Fig. 3), which contrasts with the matte appearance of the *Compasso* pages. The pastedowns and blank leaves show staining that results from close proximity of the turn-ins of the leather on the cover. The two blank leaves III and IV at the rear of the book match the quality and situation of the

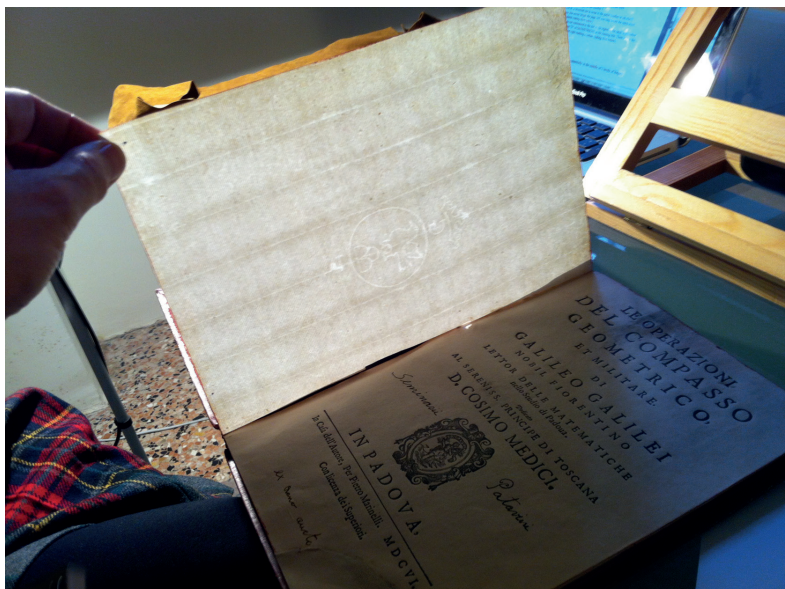


Fig. 9: Padua Compasso during examination, blank leaf II lifted in front of a light source to show the watermark; to the right, the forged title page.

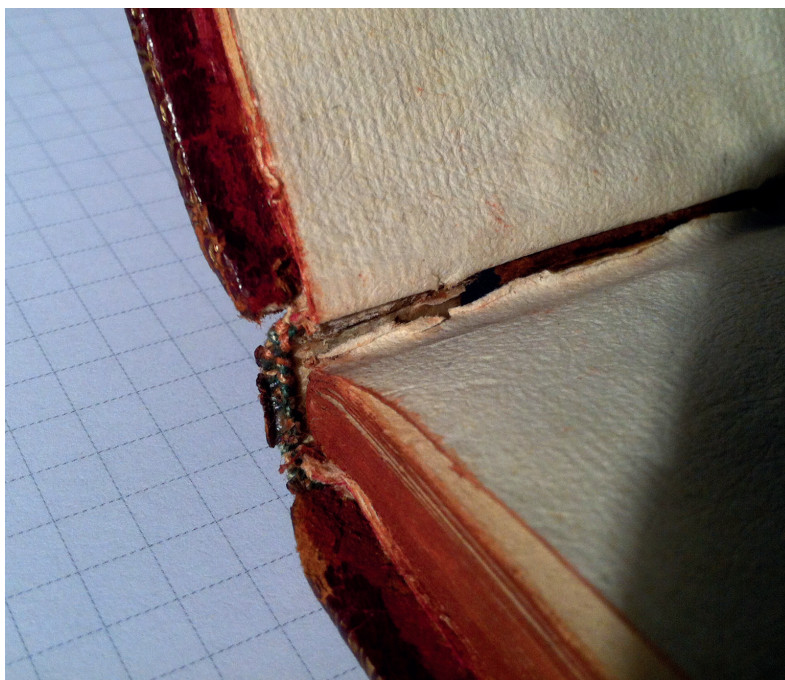


Fig. 10: Padua Compasso opened to show the disturbed binding with the endband and blank leaf sheets next to the text block forgery (paper support is 5 mm squared).

blank leaves at the front. All of the sewing stations evident in the blank sheets match the location of the cords at the pastedown.

At the head and tail are the remainder of red and green endbands unattached to the text block. They are glued to the leather of the cover and are partly embedded in a crusty, glossy transparent adhesive (Fig. 10). The blank leaves are haphazardly attached in the joint between the end sheets and the forged text block.

The dimensions of the endpapers and blank sheets apparently had to be adjusted to match the dimensions of the inserted forged text block. They appear to have been trimmed. This is indicated by roughened paper edges that are curvy close to the gutter where running a blade would have been more difficult (see Fig. 10). Even the pastedowns were trimmed by cutting through the paper close to the edge so that a narrow strip could be peeled off the leather turn-ins, which were skinned in the process. About 4 mm of the the pastedowns were removed in height and about 2 mm in width; only the front edge of the pastedown inside the front cover was not trimmed. The skinned leather required yet another manipulation to conceal its exposed brown-coloured interior. It was tinted red quite generously. The red colourant was smudged across the edges of the pastedowns, making them look muddy red around the perimeter (see Fig. 7).

The title page and last leaf of the forgery were, probably purposely, damaged. In both locations, the lower leaf corner was torn off in an arced shape and the loss was sloppily repaired. A piece of modern laid paper was adhered in each loss area with a few daubs of adhesive that scarcely hold the inserts in place. The joint area was abraded so the printed leaf

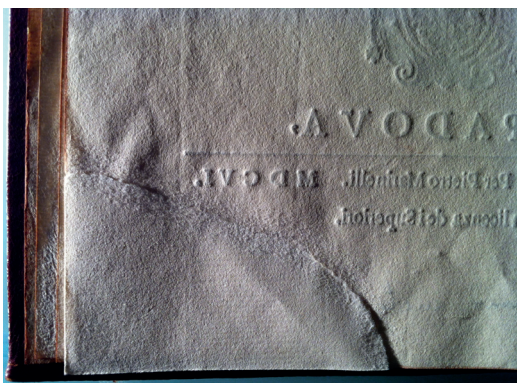


Fig. 11: Padua *Compasso*, detail of the forged title page, verso, seen in raking light, showing repair with modern laid paper.

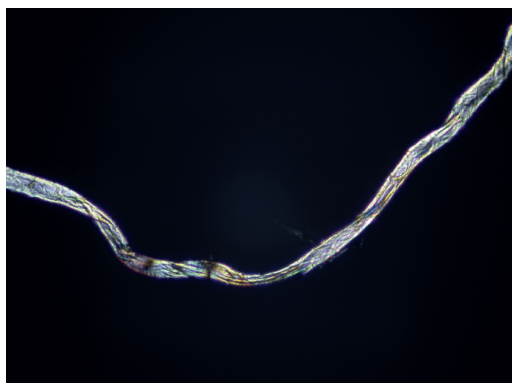


Fig. 12: Cotton linter sample from the paper insert of the Padua *Compasso*, photographed at 200×, viewed in crossed polarized light, showing helical twists and fibril striations typical of cotton.

and insert paper show a locally roughened surface in raking light (Fig. 11). The insert papers have a chain line distance of 34 mm – different from the *Compasso* and *SNML* papers – but are also made from cotton linter (Fig. 12), which is proof of their relatively recent manufacture. Like the *Compasso* and *SNML* papers, the insert papers also have shadow lines not in keeping with the chain lines (see Fig. 6a, p. 44). The fake restorations were probably done in an attempt to distract from the crude look of the forgery.

